**German / American differences in the home (Generalizations)**

Bathroom light switches often on the outside of room.

Doors to every room (no or few open concept homes)

For example, as a guest, taking off your shoes and then being offered utility Hausschuhe that have been offered to many other guests' feet in the past.

Or getting Abendbrot when you might have been expecting (American-portioned) dinner.

Also positives - like getting a full German breakfast instead of Carnation Instant Breakfast!

- Control of your room temperature with a radiator (turn low in the morning when leaving the house)

-Doors are generally closed- this includes the bathroom door

- Beverages are usually provided in bottles (mineral water, cola, some juice, beer) and stored in crates. The bottles need to be returned to the crate in order to collect "Pfand" on it.

- Bedding is usually duvets. In some households they are expected to be regularly aired out of the bedroom window.

- At the breakfast table you may encounter "Brettchen" rather than plates.

- Walls are generally cement covered in a wallpaper-like material. Thus putting a hole in one is a bigger deal than in drywall.

Germans generally don't drink tap water (although it's perfectly safe).

Germans eat a lot less ready-made cereal, but a lot more chocolate and other sweets.

You don't have cakes for dessert, but for "Kaffee und Kuchen" in the afternoon.

Most stores must by law be closed on Sundays (except some bakeries and flower stores and stores catering to 'travelers' [gas station stores; stores at larger train stations]).

You can get almost all German books from any bookstore overnight (and by law they must cost the same wherever you buy).

The main meal is supposed to be kunch (although this is changing as fewer people come home in the middle of the day).

Schools are far less central in German small-town life than in the US, partly because there are "Vereine" for special interests, and there is better piublic transportation so students are not stuck at the school.

Alcohol is less of an issue.

Germans eat a lot more pork than Americans. There pork somehow is less greasy (different breeds, I presume). You can even have a "Gehacktesbrötchen" consisting of raw ground pork, eat it, and survive (I have had hundreds of them).

Germans eat many more foods in special seasons. Spargel, Erdbeeren, Kirschen, etc. Fruit eaten in season is much mor eflavorful than most in the US (which has been bred for shelf life).

Americans need a bigger 'space bubble' around them to feel comfortable. Germans will often move closer than is comfortable for Americans.

Germans often wiill be much more direct and 'confrontational' than Americans. They usually mean what they say and say what they mean more directly than Americans. For example in discussions, Americans will spend endless time poiting out how much they agree with the preceding speaker and then slowly move in for the kill, while Germans tend to point to areas of disagreement first before they zero in on all the areas where they agree. Germans are not very used to cocktail party-types of communicvation where you change partners after 10 minutes or so.

As a visitor, you should let friendship develop. In the US, you show a lot of friendly behavior to make a 'visitor' feel at ease. Germans will often take average US politeness as an invitation to real friendship and can be disappointed when the American later walks off with others.

Germans will not introduce everyone they are with if they just casually run into you in the street and axchange a few words about the weather.

Ladies should extend their hands first for handshaking (and Germans shake hands more often).

Students generally go dutch.

Germans don't mind letting their children go out by themselves. Traditionally, students walk to school and back on their own or take public transportation. Sleeping babies can be left alone in the crib for about 30 minutes for some quick business that the caretaker can walk to.

Germans don't have closets, but use Schraenke. (This has to do with the fact that German walls are generally brick walls, which would be too cumbersome to use for closet space).

Most German apartments don't come with the kitchen built in.